



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

AQUACULTURE POLICY

Vision for U.S. Aquaculture: To assist in the development of a highly competitive, sustainable aquaculture industry in the United States that will meet growing consumer demand for aquatic foods and products that are of high quality, safe, competitively priced and are produced in an environmentally responsible manner with maximum opportunity for profitability in all sectors of the industry.

DOC Aquaculture Mission: A mission of the Department of Commerce (DOC) is to create sustainable economic opportunities in aquaculture in a manner that is environmentally sound and consistent with applicable laws and Administration policy. This mission complements and is an integral part of the Department's effort to restore and maintain sustainable wild stock fisheries in order to maximize the benefits of U.S. coastal resources for its citizens. Aquaculture in the United States can make major contributions to the local, regional, and national economies by providing employment in a new and diverse industry and by creating business opportunities both here and abroad. The United States can lead the world in the development of aquaculture technologies and advance international guidelines for the industry in order to maintain a healthy environment.

Definition: Aquaculture is defined as the propagation and rearing of aquatic organisms in controlled or selected aquatic environments for any commercial, recreational, or public purpose.

DOC Aquaculture Objectives: The DOC and its agencies, working in partnership with USDA, DOI, other Federal agencies, state, local, and tribal governments, environmental organizations, industry, academia, and other stakeholders at the national and regional levels will create a business climate and technological base for industry to develop environmentally sound aquaculture. The specific objectives by the year 2025 are to:

- A. Increase the value of domestic aquaculture production from the present \$900 million annually to \$5 billion, which will help offset the \$6-billion annual U.S. trade deficit in seafood.
- B. Increase the number of jobs in aquaculture from the present estimate of 180,000 to 600,000.
- C. Develop aquaculture technologies and methods both to improve production and safeguard the environment, emphasizing where possible those technologies that employ pollution prevention rather than pollution control techniques.
- D. Develop a code of conduct for responsible aquaculture by the year 2002 and have 100% compliance with the code in Federal waters.
- E. Double the value of non-food products and services produced by aquaculture in order to increase industry diversification.
- F. Enhance depleted wild fish stocks through aquaculture, thereby increasing the value of both commercial and recreational landings and improving the health of our aquatic resources.

- G. Increase exports of U.S. aquaculture goods and services from the present value of \$500 million annually to \$2.5 billion.

Policy Implementation: To achieve these objectives, the Department of Commerce and its agencies, working in partnership with USDA, DOI, other Federal agencies, state, local, and tribal governments, environmental organizations, industry, academia, and other stakeholders at the national and regional levels will:

1. Work with stakeholders to develop a set of aquaculture guidelines for DOC aquaculture activities by the end of the year 2000 and ensure that all subsequent Departmental activities conform to these guidelines.
2. Conduct research and help develop guidelines for an environmentally sound and sustainable aquaculture industry and promote domestic and international compliance with the guidelines.
3. Consistent with these guidelines, conduct basic and applied research to domesticate additional species, giving preference to high-value species and to those that are least likely to create problems for the environment.
4. Deliver U.S. government aquaculture services, assistance, and research to state and local governments and industry in a comprehensive and coordinated manner.
5. Hold national and regional meetings with aquaculture constituents to inventory present resources and issues and set priorities for the future.
6. Develop an efficient and transparent permitting process for aquaculture.
7. Accelerate the implementation of new aquaculture production methods by developing both pilot scale and demonstration projects where necessary.
8. Develop effective enhancement strategies, where appropriate, for aquatic species to help wild stock fisheries recover and to provide additional recreational opportunities.
9. Integrate aquaculture development with wild fish stock management and environmental stewardship to maximize the value of our aquatic resources for the benefit of the nation.
10. Minimize the adverse impacts of aquaculture on protected species through proper design and siting of facilities and the application of appropriate deterrent technologies.
11. Provide financial, marketing, and trade assistance to the aquaculture industry.
12. Provide extension, training, and education programs to ensure a competitive, safe industry.
13. Provide an information clearinghouse and information dissemination system to facilitate achieving aquaculture objectives.